



CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 14, 2012 / Calendar No. 5

N 120185 HKK

IN THE MATTER OF a communication dated January 26, 2012, from the Executive Director of the Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the landmark designation of the Williamsburg Branch, Public National Bank of New York, 47-49 Graham Avenue (Block 3105, Lot 26), by the Landmarks Preservation Commission on January 17, 2012 (Designation List 451/LP-2471), Borough of Brooklyn, Community District 1.

Pursuant to Section 3020.8(b) of the City Charter, the City Planning Commission shall submit to the City Council a report with respect to the relation of any designation by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, whether of a historic district or a landmark, to the Zoning Resolution, projected public improvements, and any plans for the development, growth, improvement or renewal of the area involved.

On January 17, 2012, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated the Williamsburg Branch, Public National Bank of New York, located at 47-49 Graham Avenue (Block 3105, Lot 26), as a city landmark.

The Williamsburg Branch of the Public National Bank of New York was built in 1923 to serve the growing population in Williamsburg in the first part of the 20th Century. The Public National Bank of New York opened on the Lower East Side in 1908 and grew to control the 4th largest branch network in New York by the 1950s, with branches in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx. The Williamsburg Branch is currently used as a branch for the Bank of America. The Williamsburg Branch was designed by Architect Eugene Schoen (1880-1957), who is little remembered today other than as a furniture designer, but who was at the forefront of modern American design in the first half of the 20th century and was an esteemed contemporary of many well-known colleagues. Eugene Schoen had many distinguished interior design commissions including Rockefeller Center. Designed after Schoen's study in Europe, the Williamsburg Branch is a rare example in New York City of early 20th Century Viennese influence and was published in *Architecture and Building* in 1923.

Designed in the form of a one-story temple and clad in cast stone (now painted), the Williamsburg Branch features rusticated columns and corner piers on both principal facades that frame rectangular and round-arched fenestration, with panels and entrance surrounds displaying

a combination of classical and Secessionist ornament. The corner structure achieves monumentality through the use of bold classical forms, abstraction, and predominant rustication. Despite alterations that include reconfiguration of entrance and window openings on Graham Avenue, the Williamsburg Branch remains one of Schoen's most interesting and intact architectural commissions.

The landmark site is located in a R6/C1-3 zoning district with an allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.43. Located on a 5,000 square foot zoning lot, the landmark site could be developed with approximately 12,150 square feet of floor area. The zoning lot is developed with 9,400 square feet of floor area. Therefore, there are approximately 2,750 square feet of floor area available for transfer. Pursuant to Section 74-79 of the Zoning Resolution, a lot with a landmark building may transfer its unused development rights to a lot contiguous to the zoning lot occupied by the landmark or one which is across the street and opposite to the lot occupied by the landmark building, or in the case of a corner lot, one which fronts on the same street intersection as the lot occupied by the landmark building. There are five potential receiving sites available for the transfer of the proposed landmark's unused floor area.

All landmark buildings or buildings within Historic Districts are eligible to apply for use and bulk waivers pursuant to Section 74-711 of the Zoning Resolution.

The subject landmark does not conflict with the Zoning Resolution. In addition, the Commission is not aware of any conflicts between the subject landmark designation and projected public improvements or any plans for development, growth, improvement, or renewal in the vicinity of the landmark building.

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